

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5236

INFO USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, KS, KN

SUBJECT: SECSTATE COMMENTS ON US-KOREAN RELATIONS

1. SEOUL NEWSPAPERS FRIDAY FRONTPAGED REPORTS SECSTATE DISCUSSED KOREA POLICY WITH VISITING ROK ASSEMBLYMEN. FOLLOWING IS FULL TEXT CHOSUN ILBO REPORT BY WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT KIM TAE JUNG:

BEGIN QUOTE:

IT WAS LEARNED HERE THAT SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY A. KISSINGER, JANUARY 28 DENIED THE RUMOR THAT HE IS ENCOURAGING DIALOGUE WITH NORTH KOREA THROUGH JAPAN, SAYING THE RUMOR IS ENTIRELY GROUNDLESS. THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S STATEMENT WAS MADE AT PRESIDENT FORD'S PRAYER BREAKFAST MEEING DURING WHICH REPUBLIC OF KOREA ASSEMBLYMEN MET HENRY A. KISSINGER. ASSEMBLYMEN SOURCES SAID THE SECRETARY OF STATE SAID THE U.S. WILL FIRMLY REACT SHOULD NORTH KOREA ATTACK THE FIVE ISLANDS OF THE WEST SEA. SOURCES ALSO SAID THE SECRETARY OF STATE SAID HE WOULD NOTE CAREFULLY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA REQUEST FOR LONG-TERM MILITARY LOAN ASSISTANCE IN VIEW OF THE SPECIAL NATURE OF ROK-US RELATIONS AND THE NECESSITY FOR MILITARY AID TO THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA.

END QUOTE.

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2. OTHER PAPERS ALSO CARRIED CORRESPONDENTS REPORTS OF

CONVERSATIONS. ORIENT PRESS REPORTED THE SECRETARY OF STATE AS SAYING "THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS NOT HAD NOR WILL IT HAVE ANY CONTACT WITH NORTH KOREA." OTHER PAPERS ALSO REPORTED, "ACCORDING TO THE DELEGATION, LED BY KIM SANG-NYON, THE SECRETARY OF STATE ALSO MADE CLEAR THAT THE UNITED STATES IS FULLY READY TO SUPPORT THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA IN ITS PREPARATIONS FOR POSSIBLE ATTACK BY NORTH KOREA, WHICH MIGHT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE UNITED STATES ELECTION CAMPAIGN PERIOD. RO JIN-HWAN, WHO MET THE SECRETARY OF STATE AT THE PRAYER SERVICE, SAID THE SECRETARY OF STATE SUGGESTED THE ROK COULD OBTAIN GRANT MILITARY AID, EVEN AFTER FY-1977, IF THE ROK WANTS IT."

3. JOONGANG ILBO ALSO CARRIED QUOTE TEXT UNQUOTE OF CONVERSATION AS FOLLOWS:

BEGIN QUOTE:

RO: KOREANS WERE DISAPPOINTED BY PRESIDENT FORD'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT GRANT MILITARY AID TO THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA WILL END IN FY-77.

SECSTATE: IT WAS A GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY. OUR POLICY TOWARD ANY ONE COUNTRY WILL BE DETERMINED BY THE UNIQUE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THAT COUNTRY. AS I UNDERSTAND IT, THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA SEEMS TO PREFER LONG TERM CREDITS TO GRANT ASSISTANCE.

RO: WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF THE JAPANESE ROLE AS AN INTERMEDIARY TO IMPROVE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE US AND NK?

SECSTATE: I WANT TO BE VERY CLEAR ABOUT THIS. WE DO NOT WANT JAPAN TO PLAY AN INTERMEDIARY ROLE OR TO INTERFERE IN OUR FOREIGN POLICY. AT PRESENT THE US HAS NO SECRET CONTACTS WITH NORTH KOREA AND WE ARE NOT INTERESTED AT ALL IN SUCH CONTACTS.

RO: WE FEAR NORTH KOREA MAY REOPEN HOSTILITIES AGAINST THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA DURING THE UNITED STATES ELECTION CAMPAIGN TO TEST THE UNITED STATES COMMITMENT.

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SECSTATE: THE UNITED STATES WILL SUPPORT THE ROK WHENEVER THE ROK IS ATTACKED BY NORTH KOREA.

RO: DOES THAT APPLY TO THE FIVE REMOTE WESTERN ISLANDS?

SECSTATE: YES, SINCE THEY ARE THE TERRITORY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA, WE WILL HELP THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA DEFEND THEM NO MATTER HOW REMOVE THEIR LOCATION.

END QUOTE.

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